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RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 0873
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 080223

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/01/2019
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS WITH TURKEY IN ADVANCE OF RUSSIAN
PRIME MINISTER PUTIN,S AUGUST 6 VISIT

REF: ANKARA 1031

Classified By: EUR DAS MATTHEW BRYZA, Reasons: 1.4
(b) and (d).

1.(U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 3.

¶2. (C) Summary: The Department requests that Embassy Ankara seek meetings at the highest appropriate level in advance of Russian PM Putin,s August 6 visit to Ankara to brief on U.S. engagement with Russia and U.S. energy strategy for the region and to elicit Turkish thinking on Russia,s role in the region.

¶3. (C/REL TURKEY) The Department requests Embassy Ankara pursue the following objectives:

-- Seek clarification of Turkey,s goals for PM Putin,s August 6 visit to Ankara.

-- Stress the shared U.S.-Turkish strategic interest in diversifying energy supplies for Turkey and Europe. Urge Turkey to prioritize diversification of energy suppliers and energy types.

--Suggest that any GOT announcement of new energy deals with Russia include statements recommitting Turkey to its critical role as an energy transit corridor for Caspian resources to Turkey, Europe, and world markets.

-- Press Turkey to finalize a transit agreement and bilateral gas sales and purchase agreements with Azerbaijan.

-- In light of the July 13 signing ceremony of the intergovernmental agreement for the Nabucco pipeline, press Turkey to work with its fellow Nabucco countries to implement the next steps to realize the project, including the signing of project support agreements and efforts to secure gas supplies from Azerbaijan, Iraq, and Turkmenistan.

-- Brief on President Obama,s July 6-8 visit to Moscow and EUR Assistant Secretary Gordon,s Congressional testimony on Russia on July 28 to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Russia and July 30 to the House Armed Services Committee.

-- Stress U.S. actions, which are building a stronger relationship with Russia, are based on mutual respect and cooperation in areas that are mutually beneficial and improving security and stability throughout the world. At the same time, we continue to voice to Russia our concerns on democracy and human rights, stand by our partnerships with Russia,s neighbors, and strive to help our allies and friends diversify their sources of supply and transit routes for energy.

Reporting Deadline

14. (SBU) Embassy should report results of efforts by cable to EUR as soon as is practicable.

Background

15. (U) During President Obama's July 6-8 visit to Moscow, he and President Medvedev made progress toward greater cooperation on areas of shared national interests, including reducing nuclear arsenals, preventing further proliferation of nuclear weapons, countering the threat of nuclear terrorism, improving economic cooperation, resuming military cooperation, and expanding civil society and cultural exchanges. Specific deliverables include:

-- The establishment of a Bilateral Presidential Commission, chaired by Presidents Obama and Medvedev, and coordinated by Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Lavrov, with working groups on: nuclear energy and nuclear security; arms control and international security; foreign policy and fighting terrorism; drug trafficking; business development and economic relations; energy and the environment; agriculture; and civil society, among other areas.

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-- Signing of a Joint Understanding to guide the work of negotiators on a follow-on agreement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which will reduce our nuclear warheads and delivery systems by at least one third of our current treaty limitations. We are working to complete this before START expires in December 2009.

-- Commitments to deepen security cooperation and counter transnational threats, including with a transit agreement that will allow the United States to transport military personnel and equipment across Russia in support of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force as well as Coalition forces in Afghanistan and the signing of a strategic framework to increase military cooperation with an agreement to conduct nearly 20 exchanges and operational events before the end of 2009.

16. (U) As we advance our relations with Russia, we will not abandon our principles, our concerns about democracy and human rights, our deepening partnerships with Georgia and Ukraine, or our support for European Allies efforts to diversify their sources of natural gas supply. This year the U.S. Government is providing over \$29 million in assistance to advance democracy and human rights in Russia, most of which is targeted to strengthen civil society, independent media, and the rule of law. We continue to raise concerns, as we did following the July 15 killing of human rights activist Natalia Estemirova, over threats to civil society and impunity for human rights violations.

17. (U) We continue to work to advance our economic engagement with Russia as well, creating conditions conducive to the growth of the current relatively low levels of bilateral trade and investment. We seek a prosperous Russia that partners with us to create jobs, unleash innovation, and build industries, including by removing obstacles to trade and investment. We stand ready to work hard with Russia and the other 152 members of the World Trade organization to complete Russia's accession as an individual country member.

18. (C) Notwithstanding our quest for economic cooperation with Russia where we can achieve it, the United States remains concerned about Europe's dependence on Russian gas imports. Last winter's Russia-Ukraine gas dispute, which interrupted supplies to much of Europe, awakened many EU member states to the need to diversify their sources of

natural gas supply. Furthermore, we have concerns about Russia,s ability to exert influence on European governments and economies that are over-reliant on Russian gas supplies. It appears Turkey may use the opportunity of Putin,s visit to sign several agreements with Russia including the first nuclear energy deal, natural gas projects like Blue Stream II, South Stream, and a renewal of the West Line contract, and oil projects like Samsun-Ceyhan and a Ceyhan oil refinery. While we do not object to energy cooperation between Turkey and Russia, we are concerned that these projects could indicate a major shift in Turkish thinking away from our strategic partnership on energy that dates back to the Clinton Administration, and could further increase Turkey,s reliance on Russia for energy, including by creating new dependencies relating to nuclear energy.

--Additionally, new deals could weaken momentum for the development of a Southern Gas Corridor, which enjoyed a major boost during the signing of an Intergovernmental Agreement for the Nabucco pipeline on July 13 in Ankara (ref A). It is therefore essential that Turkey balance its cooperation with Russia by moving forward in earnest to wrap up negotiations with Azerbaijan on gas sales and purchase agreements, as well as implementing project support agreements and other necessary steps to make Nabucco and other Southern Corridor pipelines, including the Turkey-Greece-Italy Inter-connector, a reality.

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